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TODAY'S FREE OUTDOOR SHOWS

11 a.m.: La Petite école du jazz (Grande Place, Complexe Desjardins) - Redesigned for the 20th edition, the kiddies' jazz school is in session.
Noon: Accoules Sax (Terrasse Amanda) - Six Marseillaise saxes fight the power.
1 p.m.: Hot Pepper Dixie (Terrasse Amanda) - The swinging sound of summer swelter.
1:30 p.m.: La Petite école du jazz (Grande Place, Complexe Desjardins) - See 11 a.m.
3 p.m.: A.L. Blues Devils, École secondaire André-Laurendeau (General Motors Stage)
4 p.m.: Hot Pepper Dixie (Bell-Samsung Stage) - See 1 p.m.
5 p.m.: Bourbon Street (CBC Television Stage) - Straight-no-chaser Latin Quarter Dixieland.
5:30 p.m.: Lots-Québec parade (starts at Bell-Samsung Stage) - The daily Brazilian fanfare shakes its maracas and weaves its carnival vibe through the site.
6 p.m.: Matthieu Lapel (General Motors Stage) - Canadian vibraphonist studied under Gary Burton.
6 p.m.: Samina (Savoy - Metropolis) - Hot young Montreal singer hosts a Latin/blues cabaret with her quartet. Free with pass.
6:30 p.m.: Khac Chi (Carrefour General Motors) - Vietnamese husband/wife team blows minds with expertise on native instruments.
7 p.m.: L'Esprit de la Nouvelle-Orléans (Terrasse Amanda) - The spirit of Satchmo blows through the Montreal evening.
7 p.m.: Jimmy James (Stella Artois Blues Stage) - Montreal's blues-rock Strat sorcerer.
7 p.m.: Michel Hémus Quintet (Club Jazz TD Canada Trust) - Guitarist fronts dynamite five-piece.
7:30 p.m.: Bo Cissoko (Stella Artois Stage) - Band member Sekou Kouyate has been called the African Jimi Hendrix.
8 p.m.: Geoff Young Trio (CBC Television Stage) - Toronto trio explore psychic badlands of jazz.
8 p.m.: Ray LaMontagne (Bell-Samsung Stage) - New Englander has been compared to the Band and Van Morrison.
8 p.m.: Café Soul (Loto-Québec Stage) - Drummer Tony Allona plays in an octet.
9 p.m.: The Bomb Squad (General Motors Stage) - New York horn band drops "sophisticafunk."
9 p.m.: Eddie Shaw (Stella Artois Blues Stage) - He managed Howlin' Wolf. 'Nuff said.
9 p.m.: Andy Narell Sakosho (Carrefour General Motors) - New York steel pan virtuoso brings Carib magic.
10 p.m.: Ray LaMontagne (Bell-Samsung Stage) - See 8 p.m.
10 p.m.: Geoff Young Trio (CBC Television Stage) - See 8 p.m.
10 p.m.: Café Soul (Loto-Québec Stage) - See 9 p.m.
10 p.m.: Laurent de Wilde (Stella Artois Stage) - French Renaissance man embraces nu-jazz.
10 p.m.: Michel Hémus Quintet (Club Jazz TD Canada Trust) - See 7 p.m.
11 p.m.: The Bomb Squad (General Motors Stage) - See 9 p.m.
11 p.m.: Jimmy James (Stella Artois Blues Stage) - See 7 p.m.
11 p.m.: Thurgo Von Franke Trio with Morgan Moore and Martin Auguste (Hyatt Regency, Salon Jeanne Mance) - The late-night jam session – you never know who'll stop by.
Midnight: Happy House (Savoy – Metropolis) – A late-night groove ogly for unsatisfied lounge crawlers.
12:30 a.m.: Eddie Shaw (Spectrum) - See 9 p.m.

The Montreal International Jazz Festival runs through Sunday, in and around the Place des Arts area. For a complete schedule, go to www.montrealjazzfest.com. For other information, call the Info-Jazz Bell Line, (514) 871-1881, from 9 a.m. to 10 p.m. daily. Tickets for indoor shows can be purchased from Ticketpro at (514) 908-9090, www.ticketpro.ca, or Admission at (514) 790-1245, www.admission.com.

DISC OF THE DAY

COURTESY OF NOCTURNE/FUSION3

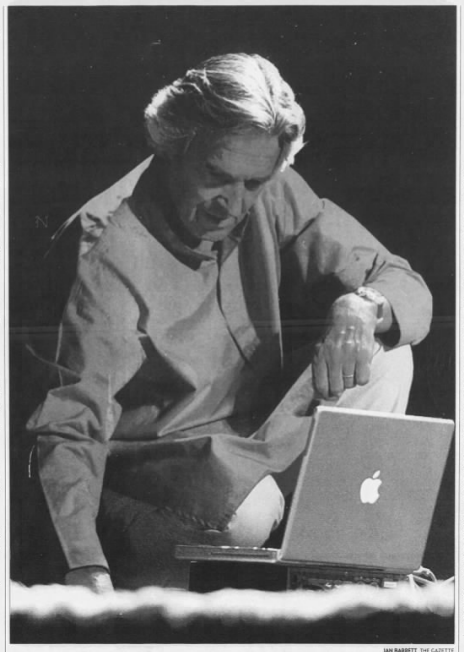
L2W: space-age disco elevator music.

L2W

Organics
Nocturne/Fusion3

L2W is the latest project by Laurent de Wilde, who once wrote a biography of Thelonious Monk but is eons away musically. As improvisation goes, Organics is pretty hokey stuff, but that's quibbling in this groove attack peppered with sci-fi effects. Machine-gun bass 'n' drum (Philippe Bussonnet and Yoan Serra) punctuates ethereal "quiet storm" sax by Gael Horellou, while de Wilde judiciously uses samples of disconnected voices to set the stage for his Rhodes electric piano glows and noodles. More like space-age disco elevator music than anything else, with plenty of swooshes designed to give you close encounters of the third kind in a lounge setting. Laurent de Wilde's L2W project plays a free concert on the Stella Artois Stage at 10 tonight.

JUAN RODRIGUEZ



IAN BARRETT THE GAZETTE

Guitar legend John McLaughlin fiddles with his laptop on stage before his jazz fest show last night with tabla master Zakir Hussain.

JAZZ FESTIVAL NOTES

Some snubbed, others loved

Thin scene for Norwegian Wesseltoft

But they packed it in, whooping 'n' whistling, to hear pop singer Ron Sexsmith on Saturday

FRIDAY

CLUB SODA

Where were all the hipsters when **Bugge Wesseltoft**, patron saint of the fertile Norwegian electro-jazz scene, performed at midnight at Club Soda on Friday? The keyboardist, who runs Oslo's innovative Jazzland label, faced a sparse crowd as he hunkered through big-beat industrial sounds.

Unfortunately, his machines sounded like ... machines, and clunky at that. Interesting if you hadn't heard them before, but prosaic compared to the creations of Bugge's progeny.

JUAN RODRIGUEZ

SATURDAY

METROPOLIS

The party animals were out in force at the Metropolis on Saturday night to hear the ultimate party band. Before a raucous crowd, **Medeski Martin & Wood** hit the stage after an opening act by the **Young Philadelphians** and wasted no time delivering the warped groove they are famous for.

After 14 years together, MMW have followed a simple ethic: stick together and make music. These guys know what they're capable of, and they just do it.

They took the stage as drummer **Billy Martin** delivered forbidding percussion rolls with his rattlers, **Chris Wood** churned out frantic lines on the acoustic bass and **John Medeski** played mad scientist, scurrying around his array of organs, keyboards and synths to conjure up the sickest possible sounds.

It only got crazier when **Marc Ribot**, the first of several guests on the night, plunged in with manic guitar lines straddling avant-garde and funk.

PETER HADDAD

THE SPECTRUM

If one can judge by the cheering, whistling clubgoers who would-

IAN BARRETT THE GAZETTE

Ron Sexsmith is emerging from cult-hero status to enjoy mainstream success, judging by his reception Saturday eve.

n't let **Ron Sexsmith** leave the Spectrum stage on Saturday evening, the singer-guitarist is finally crossing the line from cult hero to mainstream success. No one deserves that noisy standing ovation more than the man who writes the strongest melodies and the most uplifting lyrics in contemporary pop.

During his first encore, Sexsmith introduced the jazz-flavoured torch ballad Foolproof as a song he had written for **Diana Krall** to sing. "I'm still waiting for her to sing it," he quipped. "But if she doesn't do it, maybe **Bublé** will do it." Two more songs failed to satisfy the fans, so the singer came back, stood alone in the spotlight with his guitar and closed the show with a heartbreakingly tender God Loves Everyone. Only those with a heart of stone could have been left dry-eyed.

BERNARD PERUSSE

THE SPECTRUM

Randy Weston hadn't played with **Candido Camero**, pioneer of the three-conga technique, since 1960. Candido played with **Chano Pozo**, whose wailing Afro-Cuban percussion electrified **Dizzy Gillespie**'s 1940s Latin orchestra. Those sounds "changed my life," and led him to explore the music of Mother Africa, said Weston, 79, at Saturday's tribute to Pozo at the Spectrum.

"I'm 84 years old," announced Candido, dapper in pink shirt, tie and charcoal gray suit. "My arthritis when I walk on stage makes me look 100. But when I play these three white conga drums – look out!" He stood with a sly smile while effortlessly tapping the most eerie rhythms and patterns.

Deep block chords and tinkling asides made Weston's solos a quest. He stood at attention when Candido, bassist **Alex Blake** and percussionist **Neil Clarke** took important solos. That's the kind of humility – toward the mysterious ways of music – that imbued this evening with magical spirituality.

JUAN RODRIGUEZ

GESÙ

At the Gesù venue Saturday night, pianist **Geri Allen** had an attentive audience enthralled with her acoustic trio, which includes bassist **Kenny Davis** and drummer **Mark Johnson**. Her performance of husband **Wallace Roney's** tune Northern Lights was as dramatic as it was unpredictable – a study in constantly shifting rhythmic points. The ballad Unconditional Love found Allen at her stately and dignified best. And the bluesy encore, Black Bottom, with a touch of electronica added, had the house in a gentle sway.

PETER HADDAD

SUNDAY

MONUMENT NATIONAL

If some music lovers knew little about Indian percussion before the festival, they were given a heady lesson in all its variety in **Zakir Hussain's** invitation series of concerts, which ended last night at Monument National. In appreciation for the programming coup, the tabla master gave festival co-founder **André Ménard** a set of rabbis worth about $5,000. "They're really heavy," Ménard said, "but I'm going to try to play them. Who knows? This is the best inspiration I could get."

JUAN RODRIGUEZ

REVIEWS

So sadly ersatz

Singer tries for Billie, comes up with Muzak

JUAN RODRIGUEZ
SPECIAL TO THE GAZETTE

In the postmodern retro world where the fake becomes the real, Madeleine Peyroux has been hailed as the second coming of Billie Holiday.

Why should hip folk settle for anonymous background Muzak when, in Peyroux, they can catch a whiff of the greatest jazz singer of the 20th century? Peyroux, a 32-year-old from Georgia and Brooklyn who is said to have found her voice in Paris, is Holiday without the heavy lifting (to paraphrase Liberace).

Last night at Club Soda, backed by a trio and limply strumming a guitar, her relentless lilt lulled her audience into a hushed comfort zone, which is why the Starbucks coffee chain sells her sophomore album, Careless Love, at the cash register, accounting for a large chunk of its nearly half-million in unit sales. This was cool-living lifestyle music – the antithesis of Holiday.

Strangely, though, her offhand, almost clueless stage presence was informed by off-putting patter. "All these lyrics, these songs, so little time," she said in a doubtsy voice. Or: "I can't see you very well, but I can hear you thinking." And: "So, do you all have drinks? In the clubs we do the same thing as we do in theatres. That's a joke ... Let's do our drinking song."

Such meandering illuminated her basic ineptitude as a singer. She was a slave to purposeless vocal tricks – oscillating swoops and swoons, mindless hesitations during phrases (almost as if she had forgotten words) – that rendered the songs into mere vehicles for stylistic clichés.

The sight of a young woman impersonating the broken latter-day Billie was pathetic. Her so-called "smoke-and-whiskey" vocals were about as tepidly cool as, well, iced caffè latte.

Unlikely rocker

Knopfler wows Dire Straits axeman plays marathon gig

BERNARD PERUSSE
THE GAZETTE

They paid up to $120 just to hear the lyrical, string-bending phrases that have come to define Mark Knopfler's guitar playing – and, boy, did they get it.

Mixing Dire Straits favourites with a sampling of solo work in Saturday night's concert at Place des Arts, Knopfler sent the melodic vibrato of his instrument echoing through the room for almost two and a half hours, with no opening act or intermission. And if the crowd's enthusiasm went annoyingly over the top several times, it was a minor irritant in an evening that brought home the beauty of one of rock's more durable bodies of work.

Looking professorial with his fringe of gray hair and spectacles, Knopfler seemed, as usual, the unlikely rocker – even though the sound was arena-loud and the lighting stadium-flashy. But it became apparent a few seconds into show-opener *Why Aye Man* that calm authority and fretboard dexterity were the real weapons of choice.

As is often the case, the sound in Salle Wilfrid Pelletier was an obstacle. Knopfler's rough vocals – lowered to a whisper on some lines – were pretty much lost in the mix, so that anyone not already familiar with the lyrics didn't have a prayer.

Still, songs like Romeo and Juliet, What It Is, Sailing to Philadelphia, Brothers in Arms and Telegraph Road have lost none of their dramatic, sometimes epic, presence, so little was lost by letting the steel strings do all the talking.

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